

KENTUCKY PERIODIC WATERFOWL INVENTORY

Conducted January 7-11 2019

This is the 2019 Mid-Winter Waterfowl survey, flown Jan. 7-11. The week started with unseasonal high temps and windy conditions, but finished with below freezing temps and reaching to the low-mid 30's during the day. Weather has been considerably mild, since the November cold front that had many hopeful for a good duck season. This year has also been one of the wettest years on record. Both the Ohio and Mississippi rivers have been well outside of their banks for a couple of weeks. River levels did recede throughout the week, leaving ample sheet water and wet areas of fields at full capacity. The recent rains left the reservoirs across the state well above winter pool, many well above summer pool. The amount of water across the landscape has scattered the ducks and geese across the state. Moist soil units, beaver impoundments and ponded depressions in crop fields have provided ample habitat this year, and these areas were free of ice during most of the survey. The Central Route, flown on Friday, found these areas frozen unless exposed to the wind. Waterfowl habitat across the state looked better than average. Flooded crops and moist soil units appeared to have an abundance of high quality food still available to ducks and geese. Although waterfowl numbers are low, there is ample habitat waiting for the remainder of birds that are still to our North.

Listed below, are the individual survey data obtained during our Mid-Winter Waterfowl Survey across the state. We wish you the best during the remainder of the hunting season. As always... stay safe and happy hunting!

Mid-Winter Survey Report for Western Kentucky - Purchase Region

Flown by: Pat Hahs on January 7 and 10, 2019

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total Ducks	Canada geese	Snows/Blues	WF Geese	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill Crane
Bayou De Chien	75	0	75	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obion Creek	680	0	680	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mississippi River	2,145	0	2,145	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mayfield Creek	2,280	0	2,280	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reelfoot NWR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ballard	15,825	75	15,900	75	500	3,500	0	0	0
Boatwright WMA	450	0	450	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Wickliffe-Paducah)	200	0	200	0	4,500	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Paducah-Golconda)	1,125	0	1,125	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barkley Lake (N of 68)	325	335	660	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barkley Lake (S of 68)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
duck Island	1,690	0	1,690	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kentucky Lake	8	1,045	1,053	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kaler Bottoms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Birdsville Islands	958	20	978	0	0	0	0	0	0
Doug Travis WMA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obion Creek (Travis Slough tract)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obion Creek (L.E. Schaaf tract)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	25,761	1,475	27,236	75	5,000	3,500	0	0	0

Notes from Pat... Waterfowl numbers were low at the time of the survey, which reflects the rest of the season. Diver numbers on the lakes are particularly low. Though numbers are not large, bufflehead are still being observed; when they have usually moved on by this time. Precipitation amounts are well above average for the fall and early winter and considerable flooding was noted. Unusual late summer flooding of ag fields prevented harvest of crops on lower elevations of the Mississippi and Ohio River floodplain. Flooding has made this food available to ducks, and good numbers of Mallards were observed dry feeding in the previously flooded fields. No ice was noted during the survey. Temperatures have been well above average for most of the season. Significant flight days of new migrants have largely gone unnoticed. The early cold in November, transitioning to generally warm temperatures has noticeably affected both duck numbers and species makeup.

Lower Ohio River & Western Coalfield

Flown by: Thomas Young on January 10, 2019

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total Ducks	Canada geese	Snows/Blues	WF Geese	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill Crane
Ohio R. (Owensboro-Green River)	3,530	150	3,680	2	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Green River-Henderson)	25	0	25	5	0	0	0	2	0
Ohio R. (Henderson-Sloughs WMA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sloughs WMA	5,460	300	5,760	125	0	1,200	0	2	0
Ohio R. (GPPL & JHHC)	324	0	324	12	400	50	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Uniontown-Shawneetown)	5,629	414	6,043	25	0	0	0	1	0
Ohio R. (Shawneetown-Tradewater R.)	4,975	100	5,075	12	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Tradewater R.-E. end of Hurricane Isl.)	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Hurricane Isl.-Golconda)	197	5	202	25	0	0	0	0	0
Hovey Lake WMA (Indiana)	308	0	308	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pond River-White City WMA	49	3	52	56	0	0	0	0	0
Tradewater River	54	0	54	17	0	0	0	0	0
Peabody Coal Property	443	50	493	563	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	21,034	1,022	22,056	842	400	1,250	0	5	0

Rough River – Yellowbank WMA

Flown by: Thomas Young on January 10, 2019

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total Ducks	Canada geese	Snows/Blues	WF Geese	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill Crane
Rough River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yellowbank WMA	283	0	283	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Brandenburg - Owensboro)	25	0	25	12	0	0	0	5	0
Totals	308	0	308	12	0	0	0	5	0

Notes from Thomas... This survey was conducted with clear sunny skies and mild winds (<5 mph). Daytime temperatures ranged from 21 degrees at start to 36 by mid-day. The Ohio River and it's tributaries were experiencing flood conditions during the survey with large amounts of water present throughout the survey route. Moderate to above average temperatures above 32 degrees have persisted prior to the survey. All moist soil units and flooded fields had open water.

Mid-Winter Survey Report for Central and Eastern KY

Flown by: Wes Little on January 7 and 11, 2019

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total Ducks	Canada geese	Snows Blues	WF Geese	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill Crane
Herrington Lake	68	3	71	42	0	0	0	0	0
Cedar Creek Lake	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
Lake Cumberland	226	30	271	143	0	0	0	0	0
Dale Hollow Lake	479	366	845	40	0	0	250	5	0
Barren River Lake	116	0	154	0	0	0	25	0	0
Green River Lake	170	7	177	0	0	0	0	1	0
Taylorville Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Central Ohio River	904	19	923	433	0	0	0	0	0
Blue Grass Army Depot	105	22	128	139	0	0	0	0	0
Licking River (Southern)	9	5	14	11	0	0	0	1	0
Cave Run Lake	9	96	106	107	0	0	0	2	0
Grayson Lake	7	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yatesville Lake	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio River- (Ashland to Scioto R.)	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
Scioto River	716	2	738	6	0	0	0	11	0
Ohio River (Scioto R. to Licking R.)	762	45	813	783	0	0	0	4	0
Licking River (Northern)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Campbell County Lake	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kincade Lake	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Totals	3,573	595	4,253	1,711	0	0	275	27	0

Notes from Wes... The Eastern flight was conducted on Jan 7, 2019. We flew in mostly cloudy skies, with 5-20 mph south winds. The day started with calm to 5 mph winds, but changed at mid-day mostly

in the 15+ mph range with extremely strong gusts, making conditions difficult. Temperatures began in the upper forties, and climbed towards sixty degrees throughout the day. Temperatures have been very mild this hunting season, with very few below freezing days in the last few weeks. The season's rainfall has been well above average, putting most major rivers out of their banks multiple times this hunting season, and leaving sheet water pooling in low places across the landscape. No ice noted during the survey. Most reservoirs were either at or above summer pool. Cave Run Lake was well above summer pool, and dabbling ducks were nearly non-existent there. The Ohio River was barely within its banks, with certain sections of the river that were outside of the riverbank. River current was very strong and the color was a dark brown from the mud, leaving most ducks found adjacent to the river. The Northern Licking river, Campbell County Lake and Kincade could not be flown due to the worsening wind conditions. Most fields with low areas and oxbows around the rivers showed good moist soil or flooded crop habitats, and were full of water. Many soybean fields and some cornfields have still not been harvested, providing ample food for waterfowl.

The central survey was conducted Jan 11, 2019. The weather was much more winter like, with temps starting well below freezing, and only climbing into the mid-thirties. Winds were calm and the sun stayed partially hidden all day. No ice noted during the survey. Most reservoirs were either at or above summer pool. The Ohio River had dropped substantially from Monday. There was still abundant sheet water in the low areas next to the river, and all oxbows and shallow water impoundments were at maximum capacity. Any shallow water that was protected from the wind had at least 50% ice cover, but the lakes were all open. Other than high water levels on the lakes and rivers, habitat looked great. Unfortunately, large numbers of waterfowl were just not found. With the lack of cold weather and abundance of water throughout the state, combined with the mild temperatures this winter, waterfowl numbers on this survey were extremely low.

In the central region, the most abundant dabbling ducks were Mallards (1536) followed by American Black duck (326) Gadwall (58) and Green-winged Teal (45). Mallards and Black ducks were easily the most wide spread dabbling duck in the central region occurring throughout the region in varying group sizes. The most abundant diving ducks were Bufflehead (182) Redhead (110) and Scaup (80); followed by smaller groups of Canvasback (34) and Ring-necked duck (16). Bufflehead were easily the most wide spread diver in the central region, and Redheads were only noted on Dale Hollow Lake. Canada Geese (658) observations were well below average, mostly due to the amount of water and food across the region. No other goose species were noted.

In the Eastern region, the most abundant dabbling duck was Mallards (1332). Black duck (221) was the second most abundant puddle duck followed by Gadwall (41) and Green-winged Teal (12) and Pintail (2). No other dabbling ducks were observed. There were almost no dabbling ducks present on Cave Run Lake, and fewer geese than normal. Very few divers were seen this year. Canvasback (56) and Ring-necked ducks (50) were the most abundant diving ducks, followed by Goldeneye (40), Bufflehead (22), and 2 Scaup. There were 1,053 Canada geese counted total, which is much lower than average. Many groups of geese were seen scattered across the state while flying between survey points. I hope everyone had a great holiday season, and enjoy the remainder of your duck and goose season.